

Chairman Powell:

I would like to add my voice to those calling for more extensive review of the proposed media ownership rules to be voted on June 2.

As a limited public resource with the ability to reach large numbers of people in a community, any decisions about the way the broadcast spectrum will be licensed should be the subject of wide debate. I feel the FCC has failed to foster this debate in the lead up to the June 2 vote on deregulation of ownership rules.

One role of the FCC is the management of available broadcast spectrum in the public interest. This role is not fulfilled by simply ensuring that the spectrum is utilized, and certainly not by making the operation of broadcast concerns economically efficient. The FCC should make certain that the resource is available for informed discussion of issues. Further, the spectrum should be accessible to the widest possible number of viewpoints. I believe relaxing the ownership rules would be contrary to these goals.

Arguments about how changes in technology have made previous limits archaic are not credible. Cable, satellite and internet services provide alternate means for communication but all involve regular payments and/or a steep initial investment compared to a \$5 radio or a \$50 television. In addition, the new media options are already dominated by a small number of national or multinational concerns. I feel it is vital to the public interest that some local control of broadcast media be maintained. New technologies have made it easier for small operations (microbroadcasters) to offer alternatives to existing radio programming. These microbroadcasts are often more in tune with the desires of the communities in which they are found. The FCC seems unwilling to encourage such enterprises yet it is willing to side with the corporations and their practices to which these microbroadcasters are a response. Whose interests does the FCC represent?

I encourage you to delay the vote planned for June 2 until there has been a thorough debate involving all parties, particularly the citizens on whose behalf you should be acting.

Sincerely,

William Hoston, Jr